



The Ames Intelligencer

Published by Ames Heritage Association, Inc.
Member of American Association for Local & State History

Restored 1861 School Ready for New Assignments

Serene in fresh grey and white paint, the 1861 Hoggatt school, first to serve the Ames area, stands restored to very nearly its original appearance.

A jaunty chimney carries wood smoke upward from the iron stove inside, sturdy shutters protect windows but open to admit light when the building is in use. A foundation of freshly laid native stones supports the aged structure with its timbers cut three years before a railroad reached the still unincorporated town that became Ames.

Inside, hand-made oak desks flank the iron stove with its good odors of wood fires and its subservient wood-box. The desks rest on the rough, somewhat patched original floor uncovered from beneath two layers of flooring that had been added. Walls have been replastered but with some original areas left to help indicate the age of the structure.

The walls, also freshly painted, are backgrounds for an 1861 American flag and a portrait of George Washington somewhat yellowed with age. One neat rectangular area of wall has been left unplastered to display some of the original lath.

A period teacher's desk recovered from a one-room school in southern Iowa dominates the front of the room. Behind the desk, two small blackboards are served with chalk troughs recovered from the ruin of the Bloomington country school northeast of Ames. That school also yielded the wainscoting used in the Hoggatt building.

A number of donated textbooks, slates, pictures and other artifacts of



Visiting Cub Scouts on a chilly day choose seats near stove in Hoggatt School. Linda Carver and Rosemary Arp are den mothers of the Den 2-Pack 196 Scouts.

the period add atmosphere to the schoolroom. Other appropriate items are sought, especially bracket lamps.

Already the historic school has started to serve its new educational role both as a museum piece and as a living history experience for adults and students. Nearly 300 persons attended its first function, an open house for members of the Ames Heritage Association on Oct. 24. School children, Scouts and other youth groups have used the building in such quick succession that an accurate record of the numbers has not been kept.

Visitors to the restored school see a building that originally was erected east of Squaw Creek and north of present Lincoln Way. It was built as a Washington Township school and in its first year served only a dozen students, most of them from two families, the Hoggatts and the Fitzpatricks. The village that became Ames then had only about a dozen dwellings. The institution that became Iowa

State University at that time was only a state agricultural farm. The first Hoggatt school teacher, Sarah Jane Emery, boarded at Farm House, first structure on the Iowa State University campus and now a national historical monument.

Constructed the year Abraham Lincoln became president, the school opened the following year. After growing, Ames took over the building and in 1867 Henry May, started teaching there and so became the first Ames teacher.

Eventually Ames built a two-story structure and the Hoggatt School lost its function. In 1900 it was incorporated into a dwelling at 1008 Third street where it survived until threatened by commercial expansion.

It was then that a group interested in saving the school organized the Ames Heritage Association. Mike Rolling donated the building to the Association and in April, 1981, the building was moved to its present location on the Meeker school grounds.

The Ames Intelligencer
Vol. 1, No. 2 Dec. 1982
Ames Heritage Association
1523 Curtiss Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010
Farwell T. Brown, *president*

Thanks Given To All Helpers

Warm gratitude is expressed to persons and groups who have contributed technical advice, materials, volunteer work or money to the Hoggatt restoration since a list of contributors was published in a previous issue of THE INTELLIGENCER. May anyone inadvertently left out please forgive but notify the editor before the next issue.

Contributors are: Ames Woman's Club and Fredreika Shattuck Quarters, money; Town and Country Kiwanis, painting inside and outside with Paul Larson, chief painter and foreman; Gertrude Johnson, costume items, maps; Wendell Allen, hardware material.

Sharon Smedal and her Cub Scouts; serving as open house guides; Polly Gossard, Mary Howard and Jackie Pritchard, "teachers" at open house; Del Woodward, Peterson Hardware, dipper for water bucket; Herb Hatch, repairing desk and installing blackboards; Ruth Brown and Thelma Miller, open house hostesses; Roger Brown, load of stove wood.

D.A.R. chapter, picture of George Washington from Old Central school; Mr. & Mrs. Paul Enser, picture of George Washington and of Old Ironsides; Mrs. Helen Molleson, wood-box; Wayne Bishop, making items from Hoggatt school scrap for sale; Charles Hamme, ink wells; Jack Barrow, supervisory time.

Ames Dairy Tribune and WOI-TV, coverage of open house; more than 250 persons attending open house Oct. 24; Kenneth Randles, labor in obtaining and cleaning wainscoat material.

A number of contributed books will be acknowledged later.

Churches Trace Roots Back to Old Hoggatt School House

Some Ames churches trace their roots to the Hoggatt school building.

In the first "History of the First Congregational Church in Ames," Mrs. Lydia Tilden in 1902 wrote, "In 1863 a Sunday School was organized in a school house on the North side of what is now Lincoln Way, formerly Boone St. The building was moved a little west near the bank of Squaw Creek and used as a dwelling---. It was moved again and is now in College Park on 3rd St - No. 1008 and is still in use as a dwelling. This first Sunday School was a Union school and Mr. Thomas Grayson was its first superintendent.

"In 1864, meetings began to be held in this school house at somewhat regular intervals. Rev. Mr. Doran and Rev. Mr. Hankins were among the

first Methodist Circuit riders and the pioneer Presbyterian preacher was Isaiah Reid of Nevada, who came about once a month."

In 1865 the railroad arrived and the first depot was built. The Congregational church was organized followed in 1866 by the First Methodist church.

In 1868, the First Baptist church of Ames was organized. Prior to formal organization, their records indicate that "...there is no church building for the little congregation so their meeting place became the Hoggatt School house located on the east bank of Squaw Creek."

Early day circuit rider, LeRoy S. Hand, in a letter to Mrs. Tilden in 1902 wrote, "I remember driving through the tall grass trying to find Ames."

Desk on Loan

The period teacher's desk in the Hoggatt school is a loan to the project by Bill and Catherine Abbott of Nevada.

Bill is with the Iowa Department of Transportation and Cathy teaches fourth grade in the Nevada schools. Bill found the desk in a southern Iowa one-room school 25 years ago when he purchased the school-house which was moved and converted into a church. The desk had been stored in a shed at Creston.

Looking Backward

A window that looks nowhere but to the past has been left in the north exterior wall of the old Hoggatt school.

Lift a narrow panel of siding suspended on hinges and you will see a massive timber darkened by more than a century of time but still sound. Ax marks made when the tree was cut, almost certainly from near the banks of Squaw Creek, plainly show.

Expert Outlines Landscape Plan

Suggestions for landscaping Hoggatt school have been made by Robert Harvey of the Iowa State University Department of Landscape Architecture. Harvey has been associated with several major restorations including Lincoln's home at Springfield, Ill., and Terrace Hill, the governor's mansion in Des Moines.

Harvey has suggested placing the stone with bronze plate that identified the school at the gate near the Burnett sidewalk. He also has proposed a board fence around the building and the placing of log benches in a semi-circle on the south side of the building.

Grass probably should not be mowed in the modern fashion but rather might be hand scythed as in the 1860's, he suggested. Harvey is providing details on possible fence construction, on the location of special outside features and on plant materials to be considered.

AHA LOOKS AT BIGGER GOALS

With the restoration of the Hoggatt school virtually completed, the Ames Heritage Association is looking toward other and larger achievements.

Eventual acquisition of an Ames museum, preferably in a building of historical and architectural significance, was the most favorably considered suggestion in a survey conducted among Association members. Such a museum would contain not only space for displays and exhibits, but also offices, classrooms, storage facilities, and a place for dissemination of materials and information.

But to meet needs of the Association until such an ambitious project can be achieved, the Association is seeking space in some existing institution such as the Ames Public Library, the Octagon or the city hall depot annex. Already some storage space has been provided in Meeker school for safekeeping of materials and artifacts already donated or promised.

Working facilities are needed most importantly to provide a base from which the Association can pursue its long-range objectives. Ambitions envision a strong and permanent organization striving to identify, preserve and in some cases to restore some of the more significant Ames buildings, monuments and sites.

More importantly, perhaps, the organization also envisions such activities as recording oral history, of promoting professional research and publication of Ames history, as the collection and preservation of existing publications, photographs, maps and other materials, and in some cases in republication of out-of-print materials.

Above all, the Association wants its efforts to contribute to local historical education by making the results of its efforts and facilities attractively and readily available.

The Association seeks warm co-operation with Iowa State University groups interested in gathering and preserving University history, especially in areas of mutual interest to both Town and Gown. One such area mentioned and expected to have popular

appeal would concern collection of materials about the "Dinky", diminutive steam train that once provided transportation between town and campus.



Polly Gossard wore appropriate costume to "teach" at first open house at restored Hoggatt school. She is the wife of Thomas L. Gossard, grandson of Sarah Jane Emery, first teacher at Hoggatt school.

Dedication Next Spring

Preliminary plans already are being made for a formal dedication of the restored Hoggatt school.

Date for the dedication will be set for sometime in the spring after weather might be expected to permit the ceremony to be held in the schoolyard. The capacity of the school is too limited to accommodate the ceremony. In case of rain the ceremony can be moved to the nearby Meeker school.

Several names for a potential speaker are under consideration, and other details already are being discussed.

Annual Meeting

Near completion of the restoration of Hoggatt school will be celebrated at the second annual meeting of the Ames Heritage Association at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 19, at Meeker school.

Christie Dailey, Des Moines, editor of The Annals of Iowa, will speak. She holds degrees in history both from Michigan State University and Iowa State University.

Officers and some Board of Directors members will be elected and annual reports read.

School Novelties Offered

Miniature wooden bells, candlesticks and vases fashioned from authentic original fragments from the Hoggatt school by F. Wayne Bishop, 1423 Grand Avenue, were sold at the school's open house in October. The novelties will continue to be available.

RENEWALS DUE

In 1983, the third year of its service, the Ames Heritage Association faces two major demands.

The Association must remain strong and active enough to maintain and operate the restored Hoggatt school and to promote its use as an educational establishment.

The Association must grow and expand if it is to realize its larger dream of preserving other landmarks of importance and of gathering and saving in permanent form the traditions and ideals that mark the development of Ames and its institutions.

To keep itself strong and active, the Association needs the continued support of every present member and the addition of new members as well. Please help by renewing your membership for 1983 and by striving to obtain new members.

Annual membership dues are: Regular, \$5; Business and Organization, \$25 or more; Sustaining, \$100. Life membership is \$1,000.

Make checks payable to Ames Heritage Association and send them to:

Rodney Fox, secretary
1523 Curtiss Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50010

Please enroll me as a 1983 member of Ames Heritage Association. I enclose \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Hundreds Visit Restored School

Lured by its quaintness, its historical values, by nostalgia or perhaps by plain curiosity, several hundred persons already have visited the newly restored 1861 Hoggatt school.

But those early visitors constitute only a tiny fragment of the thousands expected to find education and pleasure in the refurbished pioneer structure.

The little building with its simple, functional carpenter's design and its suggestions of the early cultural life of pioneer Ames is expected to attract an increasing flow of visitors from various age groups, from Ames and surrounding areas and even from further away.

Many school children who already have visited the school have expressed delight with its small and simple features, often so much in contrast with their contemporary schools.

Dozens of older persons visiting the school's first open house stood long in the sunny schoolyard to exchange stories about their childhood experiences in one-room schools.

A series of open houses is planned, but because of the small size of the classroom they will be delayed until spring when part of the crowd can be accommodated outside. Some rustic benches will be in place in the schoolyard by that time.

The school's program will stress living history experience for school children. Members of the Ames Area Retired Teachers group have volunteered to conduct classes while dressed in period costumes. Some regular teachers may prefer to conduct their own classes. Period textbooks and some slates are available but additional slates and slate pencils are needed.

Members of the faculty of the College of Education at Iowa State University have expressed plans to make use of the Hoggatt school for university education majors.

All interested individuals and groups are urged to make as much use of the building as possible.

To Reserve School

Teachers, chairpersons of groups and anybody else interested in scheduling an inspection of the building or a meeting there between the second week in August and the second week in June may do so by calling 232-6467, the Meeker school office. There the reservation will be recorded, but confirmations will not be sent.

A representative of the Ames Heritage Association will unlock the building, open the shutters and, when appropriate, build a fire in the stove.

Restoration Costs

Restoration of the Hoggatt school has cost slightly more than \$10,400.

That expenditure was necessary even though Mike Rolling donated the building as it was found in 1980 and individuals donated many hours of work.

Expenditures reported by Marvin F. Miller, AHA treasurer, are: Moving to Meeker school grounds, \$1,800; foundation, \$990; roof, \$1,045; plastering, \$316; special period windows, \$1,564; general remodeling and repair construction, including painting, \$4,750.

Cub Scouts of Den 1, Pack 169 acted as guides at the Oct. 24 open house at Hoggatt school. All are Fourth Grade Meeker students.

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Parts of School Old as Nation

Wood - and the trees that provided that wood - tell an interesting part of the story of Hoggatt school.

Prof. Leonard Kellogg, retired Iowa State University forestry professor, examined the building in late 1981 and recommended a visit to the university forestry laboratory. There cross section cuts were made, and specimens polished and examined. It was found that the beams supporting the little building for 120 years are all oak. The rough sawn four-by-fours that framed the windows and doors and most of the wall studding is elm, much of it red elm.

A sample of the original flooring is birch, undoubtedly brought from eastern Iowa. The lumber industry had begun to flourish along the Mississippi river by 1860. By 1850 there were saw mills on the Skunk river, one of which was Soper's Mill, the site of which now is a park northeast of Ames.

Except for the birch flooring, all of the Hoggatt school wood undoubtedly was native to the Squaw Creek area. Square nails were used and still exhibit their superior holding power.

Oak beams used in the building were from trees 60 to 80 years old when cut in 1860-61. They sprouted from acorns not long after the founding of our nation.

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